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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/inl/sets/72157634217367733/>

Westinghouse becomes ATR National Scientific User Facility's first industry partner

Westinghouse Electric Company LLC has joined Idaho National Laboratory's Advanced Test Reactor National Scientific User Facility (ATR NSUF) as its newest partner facility. The company treads new ground as the first industrial organization to join the ranks of ATR NSUF partners. The addition of Westinghouse, a leading supplier of nuclear plant products and technologies, provides ATR NSUF researchers access to an even wider variety of capabilities for nuclear materials and fuels research.

As an ATR NSUF partner, Westinghouse is offering its Materials Center of Excellence Laboratories (MCOE) Hot Cell Facility and accompanying laboratories to provide experimental support to ATR-related nuclear energy materials research programs. The Westinghouse facilities in Churchill, Pa., are housed in four cells that provide a broad range of testing, evaluation and characterization capabilities for both unirradiated and irradiated materials. In-place capabilities include the ability to test under a variety of environments, an extensive mechanical testing laboratory, a specialized corrosion and stress corrosion cracking lab, and materials microstructure and chemical characterization instruments. Specialized facilities are also available to measure the radioactivity properties of materials under investigation as well as neutron and gamma sources facilities, which can be employed to assess materials' response to in-situ radiation.

"Becoming an ATR NSUF partner facility provides a win-win situation for the interactions of INL ATR basic research programs with our industry-driven initiatives," said Jim Brennan, vice president, Westinghouse Engineering Services. "We believe that opening our facilities to the nation's scientific investigators will facilitate more effective technical information exchanges between the DOE nuclear energy and university programs and the interests of the commercial nuclear power generating industry."

Westinghouse learned about INL and ATR NSUF through collaborative subcontract research. The request to become an ATR NSUF partner facility to share capabilities and expertise with ATR NSUF experimenters is a testament to the value seen by Westinghouse in the unique research that the ATR NSUF facilitates.

"In addition to bringing an outstanding set of new capabilities, having an industry partner opens up ATR NSUF opportunities for our university users to more easily collaborate with commercial nuclear power industry organizations," said ATR NSUF Industry Programs Lead John Jackson. "Through these kinds of collaborations, university users will learn about the research needs of the nuclear power industry, and by learning about industry needs, these university users are in a better position to propose research experiments that solve some of the challenges this industry faces."

By leveraging partner facility capabilities spanning the U.S., ATR NSUF has expanded opportunities for science and technology research, building on the foundation of offering users the capabilities at INL, the DOE's lead nuclear energy laboratory. Partners add value to the ATR NSUF program because they bring capabilities that are either not offered at INL or that typically become oversubscribed.

"Partner facilities enable the ATR NSUF program to better meet the needs of the nuclear research community by facilitating access to capabilities that might not otherwise be available to researchers," said Frances Marshall, ATR NSUF program manager and acting scientific director. "Adding Westinghouse to our partnership program will increase the ATR NSUF network of users and expand the research capability of the partner facilities, in turn expanding the research capabilities for the whole nuclear research community."

The addition of Westinghouse makes a total of 11 ATR NSUF partner facilities: eight university partners, two national laboratory partners, and now one industry partner.

Since its designation as a National Scientific User Facility in 2007, ATR NSUF has awarded 69 research experiments involving 20 universities and three other national laboratories. To learn more about proposing research and capability offerings, visit the ATR NSUF website at <http://atrnsl.inl.gov>.

INL is one of the DOE's 10 multiprogram national laboratories. The laboratory performs work in each of DOE's strategic goal areas: energy, national security, science and environment. INL is the nation's leading center for nuclear energy research and development. Day-to-day management and operation of the laboratory is the responsibility of Battelle Energy Alliance.

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